

LYRICS

ELIAS
SWALTON

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LYRICS.

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BY

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To
F. P. C.

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'Fadeless'	„ „ „ „
'Snowdrops'	„ Messrs. R. Cocks and Co.
'A Last Song'	„ „ „ „
'Nocturne'	„ Messrs. Ascherberg and Co.
'The Wayside Seat'	„ Messrs. Cramer and Co.

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SEVEN LOVE-SONGS,

(Written from the East.)

I. A LAMENT.

THE palm-tree standeth lonely in the sun,
The mournful fountain calleth to the river,
One bright-hued bird still brooding on and on,
Perchance a truant mate bewaileth ever.

Yet, patient tree—e'en now upon the plain,
A fair young palm beside it doth arise ;
The fountain and the stream will meet again,
And laugh together 'neath the Orient skies.

With flash of jewelled wing the wandering mate
Returns to its allegiance by-and-by ;
To all things cometh rapture soon or late—
And must I be alone until I die ?

II. HAUNTED.

O how can I forget you, when the morning fair and fleet,
All robed in dewy freshness, brings to mind your presence
 sweet ;
And the soft blue-flow'ring lotus on the river-breast that
 lies
Repeats at every turn the tender beauty of your eyes ;
While I hear your voice's music as the groves with love-
 notes ring ;
While I think you, feel you, know you in each rare and
 radiant thing !

O how can I forget you, as the burning sun goes down,
And heaven is like a sapphire with diamond dust
 o'erstrown ;
When the image of your loveliness in every star I see,
So calm and pure, so dazzling bright, and ah, so far from
 me !
While I hear my own wild longing in the night-bird's
 thrilling lay ;
While you fill my life from dawn to dusk, from darkness
 until day.

III. THE DREAM.

Softly the gold of the day was paling,
Swans down the river were sailing, sailing ;
Silent between them my boat went gliding,
Out to the west where the sun lay hiding,
 Last night, in my dream.

Came there no scent of the amra flower,
Breathed there no breath from the jasmine bower ;
Seemed all the air with fresh roses fanned,
For I was again in the dear old land,
 Last night, in my dream.

On, ever on, amid lights and shadows,
Drifting, I passed thro' your lordly meadows ;
When, as the willows bent peacefully o'er me,
Lo ! on the bank, there you stood before me,
 Fair, most fair, in my dream.

I saw the waves of your wind-blown hair,
I gazed awhile on your face so fair,
I read the look in your eyes divine,
As your warm hand trembled into mine—
 Into mine, in my dream.

Then, from the cloud-bank, the sun broke free,
Kindled a glory for you and me,
Flushing the heavens from west to east
With brightness as for a bridal feast,
 Last night, in my dream.

On we sailed, amid field and meadow,
Myriad lights with never a shadow,
On, ever on, oh, we knew not whither,
Until in the glow we were lost together—
 You and I, in my dream !

IV. A HOPE.

If sweetest dreams had sweetest meaning,
 Then you and I might meet again ;
 If fate had left one hope for gleaning,
 It should not lie at my feet in vain ;
 Strangely there rises, intervening
 With thoughts perplexed, an old refrain :
 ‘Time to own defeat,
 When no chance remaineth ;
 Time to make retreat,
 When advance nought gaineth ;
 Time to yield the ground,
 When no goal desiring,
 Or the prize be found
 Worth not the aspiring.’

How had it been, if, as we parted,
 I then had spoken, tho’ unmeet ?
 What if, in madness, proud, fainthearted,
 I misconstrued your silence, sweet ?
 Ah ! can it be we had *not* parted,
 Had I but pleaded at your feet !
 ‘Time to bid farewell,
 When the welcome faileth ;
 Time to ring the knell,
 When no prayer availeth ;
 Time enough to sigh,
 When aught comes to grieve for ;
 Time, yes, time to die,
 When none lives to live for.’

V. YES OR NO?

See, I will no longer wait ;
See, at last I tempt my fate ;
Have you any hope to give me ?
Do I ask too much—too late ?

Others love you for your face,
Noble name and ancient race ;
For your blush, your smile, your tresses,
Tender voice, or nameless grace.

I adore you, sweet, no less
For your dove-like gentleness,
For the fair, white soul that lends you
Beauties fresh and numberless.

Suitors may with suitors vie
In approaching worthily
You, the queen of all men's homage ;
Nought to bring but love have I.

Love is noble, love is great—
So I, too, have dared my fate !
Will there come a word to bless me ?
Have I sought too much—too late ?

VI. SUSPENSE.

O, the days are stealing, stealing,
And I know not what I do,
With the anguish unabating
Of the weary, weary waiting
For the love and life and healing
That are long overdue—
Long overdue.

Does the lorn and seabeat sailor,
In tossing to and fro—
Does he loathe the light that cheered him,
Or curse the sail that neared him
Only to melt and go?
It may be so.

But remember, love, remember,
Whatever I may rue,
I shall blame the hope that fled me,
The folly that misled me,
The fate my doom decreeing,
The hour that woke my being;
But never, never you!
Remember, never you!

VII. AT LAST.

It is come, is come,
That took so long in coming—
Only a little letter, yet it plays a mighty part ;
For it holds a world of love,
This white, white dove
That fluttered over sea
And land, to me ;
And it nestles at my heart.

It is come, is come,
That seemed a lifetime coming—
This little faithful messenger, o'er leagues of land and
sea ;
And it lies within my breast,
As I look toward the west
Now flushing with the splendour,
Rose-hued and tender,
Of a bridal day to be.

I come—I come !
May all things speed my coming !
If wishing could but waft me, O, the wind were not
more fleet ;
I come, o'er sea and land,
To claim your hand ;
To hold you safe and fast,
My queen, at last,
And worship at your feet !

THE PASSING OF SUMMER.

THERE was sound of music, when from azure portal
Stepped the blue-eyed summer on our land to dwell ;
Almost her bright beauty looked to us immortal—
Now to all that sweetness must it be farewell ?

Does a tender trouble stir the river's bosom,
As some cloudlet shadow dims its mirror clear ?
Seems yon fragile creeper, hung with bell-like blossom,
Stretching out soft tendrils to bind the summer here ?

Nay, but she is passing—on a couch of flowers
Leave her to her slumber ; then look forth and see,
New and changing glories wait to crown the hours,
They are not yet over, nor will ever be !

A GARDEN FANTASY

'Tis only a handful of autumn flowers,
Gathered but now, I know,
Yet bringing a mem'ry of happy hours,
And a fragrance of long ago.
O'er them I bend with a saddened smile,
And a mist comes over my eyes the while.

Then out of that mist gleams a homestead fair,
Like a jewel amid the trees ;
Ah me, the scent of that mountain air—
The hum of the drowsy bees ;
And the faces that look on me long and well
Are sweeter and kinder than I could tell.

I wonder at times where my home may be,
In what blessed land or star ;
For home can never be home to me,
Except where the loved ones are.
Heaven light my feet on the same dim way,
That I may find them again one day!

A SONG OF REST.

TELL me, little stream, when will cease thy flowing ?
Faintly dost thou murmur like a child in troubled
sleep—
When I gain the sea, and 'mid soft winds blowing,
Pour my little life into its waters broad and deep.
Far, oh ! far away,
It seems to call and say :
' Come, come and rest,
On this broad calm breast ;
Come, little stream,
Come to me and rest.'

Tell me, pretty bird, when will cease thy flying?

Whitely gleam thy restless wings across a sky of gray.—
When I reach the land where blue hills are lying,
Bathed in happy sunshine through an endless summer
day.

Far, oh ! far away,
It seems to call and say :
' Come, come and rest,
Warm shall be thy nest ;
Come, little bird,
Come to me and rest.'

Tell me, heart of mine, when will cease thy sighing?

Nay, the bird shall answer, or the streamlet in its flow ;
Listen but a moment, hear their soft replying :
' When you reach the heart that set you beating long
ago.'

Far, oh ! far away,
It seems to call and say :
' Come, come and rest,
Love shall make thee blest ;
Come, loving heart,
For here alone is rest !'

THAT HOUR.

Do you remember, on that warm spring noon,
The hyacinths that purpled all the leas ;
The sailing of the soft white crescent moon,
Spirit-like, above the almond trees—
Do you remember ?

Ah love, that day of days !
Our glad eyes wandered everywhere,
As if for joy they scarce did dare
To read within each others' gaze
 What love had written there.

Do you remember, as we stood alone,
 The afternoon we met to say good-bye ;
The deep woods burned for autumn, and the sun
 Loomed, a red cross, from out the misty sky—

 Do you remember ?

Oh love, that moment drear !
Our dim eyes wandered anywhere,
Nor sought the other's face for fear
To read the long farewell, alas !
 So sadly graven there.

What shall we see, when every lonely spring
 And all the weary autumns have gone by,
And Time at last on ever-tarrying wing,
 Has brought the hour we pray for, you and I ;
 What shall we see ?

Ah love, a world there lies—
Against that hour—surpassing fair ;
A heaven of bliss untold—and we
Shall look in one another's eyes
 And find it there !

EVENING.

SEE, the sun a moment lingers
O'er the pale earth in farewell,
Flames alike the ruined tower,
And each flow'ret's closing cell ;
Now it sinks behind the hill,
Leaving all things paler still.

Down the path into the valley,
Where the quiet waters meet,
One by one the mild-eyed cattle
Come to bathe their patient feet ;
Cattle, trees, and sunset glow
Mirrored as in glass below.

Over all a calm has fallen,
Wrapping closely vale and hill ;
Gentle faces grow more gentle,
Peaceful thoughts more peaceful still ;
Now to weary earth is given
Something of the peace of heaven !

NOCTURNE.

SILENT, above the hills,
Rises the summer moon ;
Faint in the distance trills
The nightingales' soft tune.

Sing for us, happy birds !
Sing in the silver light ;
For we can find no words,
This dreamy summer night.

Cloud in the western sky,
Darkly that seem'st to lower,
Rest, and come not nigh
To shadow love's brief hour.

THE REGION OF REST.

(On seeing Frederic Walker's picture, 'The Harbour of Refuge.')

FAR away there lies the garden where I wandered as a
child,
But again from out the elm trees ring those dove notes
low and mild ;
To and fro on lawn and terrace I can see the swallows
pass,
And May-blooms lightly falling on the velvet of the
grass ;
Ah, no birds have sung so gladly since, no flowers looked
so fair—
No rest has come so sweetly as the rest that I knew
there.

I loved it well at morning, when the children were at
play,
And in the shade the old folk dreamed those peaceful
hours away ;

When noontide woke the perfume from blossoms on the
wall,
Where noisy bees made music ; but I loved it more
than all,
When it caught the hush of evening, and the sun was
burning low,
And it seemed to me like Heaven, in the glory and the
glow.

'The children bright who played there may be scattered
east and west,
'The old folk long ago have found a more abiding
rest ;
But for me its fragrance lingers, its beauty never dies,
No touch of Time can change it as in my heart it lies.
O fair and blessed region—'tis there that I would be,
When I long for something better than the world holds
now for me.

A BIRD-CALL.

O, THE earth is decked in spangles
For the morning's gay return,
And I sing amid the tangles
Of forget-me-not and fern.
Come and hear my wild notes ringing
On the breezy river shore,
Come and join in my glad singing,
Tho' you never sang before !

See, the sun is rising steady,
And the wonderful new day,
Like a fairy boat, is ready
Now to bear you right away—
Ever farther, ever fleeter,
From the night's dim dreamy shore,
Ah, perhaps to something sweeter
Than you e'er have known before !

IMMORTAL.

ROSES, once, I took thee,
Pearled with morning dew—
Birds up in heaven were singing,
My heart sang, too.
But a cloud swept over heaven,
And the dewdrops looked like tears,
And ah ! 'twas thy glance that withered
My hope—my hope of years.
Dead are those flaming roses,
Dead is my heart's dull pain ;
But the joy of that early morning
Comes like a dream again !

A garland fair and shining,
Sweet, I bid thee take ;
Here 'mid the grass I lay it,
For love's dear sake.

No more will gift or giver
Be scorned by those radiant eyes,
For now, ah ! now, between us
The cold earth lies.
It will pass away—love's offering—
Soon, like thy form divine ;
But Time shall prove immortal
This love—this love of mine.

ONE NIGHT.

It rose mid a leafy murmur,
It broke from a charmèd tree,
That song of an unseen singer,
And floated to you and me ;
Then, while entranced we listened,
It ceased, as a star might fall ;
But the silence, love, that followed,
Was sweeter after all.

The moon's light touched the grasses
With glorious silvery sheen,
One tender star stood radiant
The arching boughs between ;
Then sank the moon to slumber,
A cloud the star did pall ;
But the darkness, love, that followed,
Was fairest after all.

O rays that fell from heaven
In silver at our feet !
O time of mystic murmurings,
And love-notes wild and sweet !
There are shades more dear than moonlight,
When hearts are glad in May ;
There are silences remembered
When songs have passed away !

WINGS.

(After Victor Hugo.)

LET us be like the bird in a leafy spot,
That a moment 'lights and sings ;
On the trembling spray he trembles not,
For he knows that he has wings !

LIGHT AS AIR.

You wrote my name on the golden sand,
While the sea looked far away ;
But a little wave, in sportive mood,
Ran lightly up where the writing stood,
And covered it, in play.

I saw your eyes in the deep, deep skies,
 Then turned from them to you ;
 And marked not the cloud that rose and spread,
 Till it hung in fleecy folds o'erhead,
 And hid away the blue.

What was it, lighter than cloud or wave,
 That parted me and you ?
 What was it came between us twain,
 Light, yet fraught with a world of pain ?
 Ah, *that* we never knew.

We only know that the clouds have fled—
 We ask not, care not, how ;
 We only murmur words like these :
 ' A thousand worlds, a thousand seas
 Shall not divide us now !'

SNOWDROPS.

SNOWDROPS, white and glistening,
 Fit for your hand divine ;
 Just for their own sake, take them,
 If not for mine !

I said, ' They look their fairest,
 As the brown earth round them lies ;
 Now, fairer they shine, and purer,
 Beneath your eyes.

They will fade—ah, yes! my snowdrops,
Sweetly away, like your smile ;
But my love will live on after—
A long, long while !

THOUGHTS.

THERE are thoughts, gentle thoughts of love and duty,
That rise while the crowds around us throng ;
There are thoughts, precious thoughts of power and
beauty,
That wake 'mid the halls of light and song.

Yet the thoughts that are best and deepest ever,
Are born in the free and open air ;
They are nursed to the tune of sea or river,
And fed on the peace and pureness there.

SANS ESPOIR, RIEN.

SHALL we meet, when day is dying
In the arms of night,
Shall we watch the birds home flying
Through the soft love-light ;
Shall we walk and talk together,
In the silence, in the dew,—
O to-night amid the heather,
Shall we meet, we two ?

I would not know—I would not know,
 Just now, if it be ay or nay ;
 But hope a little, while I may,
 For I have my day's work to do !

Shall we meet on some fair noontide
 In the far away—
 Fair in snow-time as at Junetide,
 If our bridal day—
 O, with souls that never falter,
 Shall we meet and stand,
 You and I, before God's altar,
 Hand athrob to hand ?

I would not know—I would not know,
 Just now, if it be ay or nay ;
 But hope a little, while I may,
 For I have my life's work to do !

WISHING !

WE met by chance within the lane, we strolled a step or
 two,
 Then stopped to wish beneath the moon that rose so fair
 and new ;
 And I remember what I wished, ah me ! that sweet June
 weather—
 I wished that life were one long lane where we might
 walk together.

I would have given the world, I felt, could I his wish
but know ;
I only said, 'If you have wished, I'll say good-bye, and
go.'
Was I awake, or did I dream? ah me! I wondered
whether ;
He whispered low, 'No wish I know, when we are bu
together !'

QUIEN SABE!

I KISS her eyes, sometimes,
As they glance from the wall at me ;
That kiss, that glance alone
Are left for us now ; and see
How on the tell-tale glass
A trace doth yet remain.
A moment—thus, and thus,
I make all fair again.

Nay, nay, but let it be ;
For I know not—who can know !
When, with tender noiseless feet
The dead may come or go ;
And if she be not near—
Near, always—let her see,
As she comes, that the glass is dim
Where her eyes laugh out at me.

A MOMENT'S GLEAM.

WAFt of some scent-laden breeze,
Glimpse of white bloom on a bough ;
Do not sometimes things like these
Give us back, we scarce know how,

Not alone the memory
Of bright meadows, dazzling skies,
But the power their charms to see
With our very childhood's eyes ;

Not alone the velvet touch
Of the grass whereon we lay,
But the peace which made that couch
Softer far than down to-day ;

Not the lark's mere song as he
Rose and soared beyond our ken,
But the sudden ecstasy
It could wake within us then !

Sweet it is once more to know
Taste of joy unmixed with pain,
Dream the dreams of long ago,
Think those fair white thoughts again.

SMILE, SWEET LIPS.

SMILE, sweet lips—for smiles were made for your
adorning ;

When other lips are near, how lightly pass the summer
hours.

Smile, as you tremble 'neath soft pleadings in the
morning,

Or whisper fond replings 'mid the moonlight and the
flowers.

Wait, yet wait, if an ocean vast is moving

'Twixt you and those that kissed you when the summer-
time was sweet ;

Do they not murmur blessings on the absent and the
loving ?

Are they not gath'ring fondness to be poured forth
when you meet ?

Fade, ah fade, from rosy red to deathly whiteness,

When other lips are near, but never more for you, for
you ;

Better life-long enmity than loving turned to lightness,

Or boundless space than one small rift that makes the
notes untrue.

Smile, yes smile, when cold, in stately calm ungrieving,

Not, not because some warm ones press you in regret
and pain,

Nor yet for any hope that might hereafter prove de-
ceiving,

But only that no sigh can rise and rend you e'er
again !

COMING BACK.

I DREAMED that I once more returned
To that old place for which I yearned,
And took my way with eager feet
Along the winding village street.

I passed by well-known gardens fair,
And saw that some still kept with care
A little plant alive for me—
The tender flower of memory.

'Twas strange—in many and many a spot
It flourished, though I sought it not ;
In others, where it used to grow,
It had been banished long ago.

But on I went, nor paused until
I came at last, where surely, still,
More fair, more radiant hour by hour,
There lived my little memory-flower.

Ah ! why that chilling breath, that air
Of emptiness and silence there ?
From end to end the walks I ranged—
All, all was desolate and changed.

Me thought that as I tried to frame
Some question, tho' no question came,
A friendly footpath seemed to say,
'Come, follow me ; this is the way.'

It led me through the old lych gate,
Past nooks where quiet sleepers wait ;
And 'mid the shade of myrtle trees
There lay a sweet and perfect peace.

And, trembling as the breeze passed o'er,
As if a message fond it bore,
Beneath the sheltering moss-grown tower
I found my little memory-flower.

BEYOND THE WAITING.

I ASKED the quiet woods at morning,
What of the flowers so glad and gay,
That used to shine for your adorning—
And nature's voices, where are they ?
Then rose a carol clear and strong,
And filled the lifeless woods with song :
 ' Rejoice, O heart ! rejoice and know,
 Tho' darksome now the hours may be—
 Beyond the waiting and the snow,
 Spring's golden time is yet for thee.

I sat alone ; the shades were falling—
The room was silent as could be,
When, in a dream—oh, bliss entralling—
My own, my lost love smiled on me.
And through the twilight rose a song
That cheered my life and made me strong :

‘ Rejoice, O heart ! rejoice and know,
 Tho’ lonely now the hours may be,
 Beyond the waiting and the woe,
 Love’s golden time is yet for thee.’

WITH A POSY OF FIELD FLOWERS.

GLITTERING gems belong to heaven,
 Sparkling treasures, loved of night ;
 And to gentle earth is given
 Precious dower of star-flowers white.

Year by year does spring adorn her,
 Like a fair bejewelled bride ;
 Heaping blooms in every corner,
 Sprinkling mead and mountain side.

When no more the rose’s splendour
 In our vision holds a place,
 When the lily’s perfume tender
 On our memory leaves no trace,

We may yet remember clearly
 Daisies set in dewy grass,
 Wayside blossoms cherished dearly,
 Woods through which we used to pass.

Go, then, little star-flower token,
 Take my thoughts along with you ;
 Tell of memory links unbroken,
 Tell of wishes deep and true.

Not the newest nor the nearest
Do I choose of blossoms fair ;
'Tis the oldest and the dearest
Shall alone my message bear.

BARCAROLLE.

'Tis the hour
When the river grows calm as the sky
'Tis the hour
When a scent of sweet air stealeth nigh ;
And the lilies scarce stir in their sleep,
As the night-breath around them doth creep ;
While faint with all sweetness, the day
In the soft arms of night fades away.
All is rest,
For the world dieth down with the sun ;
All is rest,
For the silence of heav'n reigns alone.

As we sail,
And I gaze on thy face at my side,
Thou art pale
As the petals that float on the tide ;
Thou art pale as the lilies that dream :
Nay, it is but the moon's silver gleam
That kisseth thee at its sweet will,
While I may but gaze and be still.

Let it gleam,
 Silver moon, from its height o'er the hill ;
 Let it gleam,
 So I may but gaze and be still !

Then away,
 'Neath a heav'n with the moonlight o'erspread ;
 Then away,
 'Neath the branches that meet overhead :
 Though deep be the blue of the skies,
 More deep is the hue of thine eyes ;
 And in silence, as leaves intertwine,
 Softly stealeth thy hand into mine.
 Come away,
 For the world has died down with the sun ;
 Come away,
 For the silence of love reigns alone.

BEFORE WE PART !

(Written to Music.)

GIVE me a sign, a little sign, to teach me
 Something yet more sweet than sweetest friendliness
 of yore,
 Lest I should die to-night,
 And wander out of sight,
 Where never, never sign from you could reach me
 more.

Give me a look of deeper, different meaning
To all the true and steadfast looks that I so well
have known ;

Then, howsoe'er it be,

Life will have held for me

One fair, supreme, blest moment I may call my own.

Give me a word, if that you truly love me,
Just a word, if heart indeed have aught to say to
heart—

Let all the future seem

Some vague uncertain dream,

But give me one dear word, this night, before we part!

SPRING'S HERALD.

COME, O merry-hearted swallow !
Come and bid our land rejoice ;
Every wood and hill and hollow
Long has waited for thy voice.

In thy path are sunny hours,
And thy presence seems to bring
Perfume as of lily flowers,
And a wafting of the spring.

Sorrowful, we saw thee roaming,
When the leaves began to fall ;
But the gladness of thy coming
Surely, now, atones for all.

Come, O happy-hearted rover !
Speak of other partings past ;
Tell of many an absence over,
And return of joys at last.

What though all the days went sadly,
When we thought the waiting vain—
For the after-bliss, how gladly
Would we live them through again !

HEDGE ROSES.

ONLY a wildflower branch,
Flinging its rosy chain
Right in my way
As I pass to-day
Down a well-remembered lane.

Ah, what a deal can hang
On one soft-slender chain !
A hundred things
At once it brings
In my young life back again.

IN JUNE.

I STAND by the rosebower'd window, as I stood that
summer night
When you called me from my dreaming in the softly
fading light,
And laughed, and bade me play to you, if sound there
lingered yet
In the strings so worn and feeble of the stately old
spinnet.

I played an air that suited well its light but silvery tone,
The quaint and tender music of a master dead and
gone ;
And for my sweet reward I found a teardrop on your
cheek,
As you said of all who playèd it, I alone could make it
speak.

The night is fair as then, love, and the roses are as
sweet
As when they flung their petals thro' the window at your
feet ;
The same pale star gleams faintly over all things as of
yore ;
But when will *you* return and light the little room once
more ?

The evening breeze sighs 'Never,' but the evening star
 smiles 'Soon' ;
A bird is calling 'Some time,' but the roses say 'In
 June !'
The old spinet keeps silence in the softly fading light ;
While my heart cries out impatiently, 'Ah! would it
 were to-night !'

A CHILD'S DREAM.

It was sleepy-time, and spring ;
Soft and softer birds did sing ;
Then one fluttered round my head—
'Baby, fly with me !' it said.

'In the forest, spread for you,
There's a couch of pansies blue,
Guarded well by fairies bright,
Lit with starry lamps all night.

'You shall wake to wondrous things,
You shall grow some gauzy wings ;
Come !' it said ; and to my toe
Gave one little tweak—just *so* !

I looked round with dreamy stare—
Not a bird was anywhere ;
But mother, putting me to rest,
Wearing pansies at her breast !

WHERE VIOLETS GROW.

STILL the scent of purple violets
Comes as homely and as sweet
As when first they made a carpet
For my happy childish feet.

I can shut my eyes and see them
Peeping up on every hand,
In the dear old rectory garden
That I christened Violet-land.

There were banks of them most fragrant
Near the windows in the shade,
But I loved their wilder sisters
In the grasses where I played.

These were mine to watch and gather,
Lie and dream in, as might be ;
For no other seemed to claim them,
Only Heaven, the birds and me.

Finer flowers might come and vanish,
One by one, the seasons through,
But of ever-faithful violets
I could always find a few.

Or if now and then I sought them
All in vain amid the green,
There would live a ling'ring perfume
In the leaves where they had been.

Where Violets Grow

Like the rector's gentle memory
After years and years passed o'er ;
Like his kindly words remembered
When his voice was heard no more.

It is long, long, since I gathered
Dewy violets at morn—
I have said good-bye for ever
To the place where I was born.

And on many a stone are carven
Village names that I have known ;
While the children, my companions,
Now have children of their own.

I am dead to those I knelt with
In the old gray church erewhile,
Though no shining slab records me
In that simple dusky aisle.

'Tis no more the quiet hamlet
On the green hill's sunny brow,
But the bustle of the city
And the crowd that knows me now.

* * * * *

In this very city's turmoil,
In the heart of all the roar,
Once I found a quaint old building
Down a turn unmarked before,

Whence a floating sound of music
 Echoed low, and rarely sweet,
As its pavement's marble coolness
 Seemed inviting tired feet.

And I entered, soothed and welcomed,
 'Mid that calm and loftiness,
While the angels on the windows
 Held their hands as though to bless.

'Twas as if some beam from Heaven
 Shed a sudden tender ray
On the dull and weary sameness
 Of this earthly working day.

Was it but an odour wafted
 From the breath of altar flowers?
Or an organ-strain that took me
 All at once to bygone hours?

As I lingered, lo! a dimness
 Fell around me far and wide,
And the white-robed singers vanished,
 And the music sank and died.

Then I saw a shady garden,
 Felt the cooling breezes blow,
And a happy child I wandered
 Once again where violets grow !

A LAST SONG.

I WOULD forget the hope that lay
For one short year within my heart,
I would forget one golden day
Which stands from other days apart ;
Forget the breezy path that went
In windings 'tween the rows of corn,
The passionate song of birds that rent
The air with gladness all the morn ;
The odour of the distant sea,
The thousand sweets of evenfall—
But oh ! my friend, who walked with me,
I would forget thee most of all !

I *shall* forget, some day—some day ;
For, in a chamber dim and deep,
There waits alike for grave and gay,
In perfect silence, perfect sleep.
Then, only then, the hope that died—
That died while yet the year was green
The vain regret and all beside
Shall be as they had never been.
I shall forget, and none can tell
How soon, how late it may befall—
But ah ! sweet friend, I know full well
I shall forget thee last of all.

REMEMBRANCE.

SAY, when would you remembered be—
When pearly tints are on the sea,
Or twilight settles dreamily
 Upon the quiet river?
Whene'er the swallow comes again,
When roses glisten after rain,
When faintly rings some song refrain,
 Or gifts recall the giver?

Not then would I remembered be,
For clouds might darken all the sea;
The twilight hour too soon doth flee,
 And roses droop and perish.
The song may ring but for a day,
The swallow linger far away;
And who the hand of Time can stay
 From fairest gifts we cherish?

Remembrance doth to nought belong:
It is itself an endless song,
 A constant flowing river,
A fragrant flower of every clime,
A note in the eternal chime,
And far above the things of Time,
 It reigns a star for ever!

CHILDHOOD'S ROSES.

THE roses, the roses
Once more now I see,
So loved and so tended
By mother and me.
Around every window
They clambered and curled,
The reddest and sweetest
Of all in the world.

Alas! for the roses,
That first wintry day,
The stormy wind called them,
No more could they stay.
I saw them lie scattered
Afar o'er the ground,—
But that smile of mother's
Was all the year round.

The thrushes, the thrushes,
What music they made,
While through the long mornings
In sunshine I played.
Oh, dear arms that held me
When daylight grew dim,
To hear from the pear-tree
Their glad evening hymn.

And ever as autumn
Crept on us again,
For those happy thrushes
I listened in vain ;
But one wee bird only
Would never depart—
The one that kept singing
Within mother's heart.

The roses of childhood,
Now paler they grow,
And faint are the bird songs
Of long, long ago ;
But one voice will echo,
One smile I shall see,
When all else is silence
And darkness to me.

AT THE WINDOW.

THE old house stood within the square—
A babe watched from the window there,
With eyes so grave, and sweet, and mild,
We called him Little Angel-child.

They dressed him in soft fluttering things,
That seemed to us his floating wings ;
There was a light upon his head
As if from unseen sunbeams shed.

We often thought we'd like to peep
And see him as he lay asleep ;
'How must he look,' we used to say,
'When those two hands go up to pray !'

If I could pass the old way now,
I still should look for him, somehow,
Dim smiling from his nursery-tower,
And never older by an hour.

FADELESS.

THY clustering roses, near my heart
At morn, at noon they lay ;
And after, while they yet were sweet,
Upon the river at my feet
I let them float away :

Away, away beyond my sight,
Toward the ocean free ;
Where let them end their crimson day,
I should not know it, so would they
Be never dead to me.

THOUGHTS IN AUTUMN.

AMBER roses on walk and wall,
Orange hues on the leaves that fall,
Wood and valley in flame tints dressed,
Gleaming bars in the far-off west—
Nature has taken her pen of gold,
And the world grows bright as the year gets old.

Lessons golden and glorious
Have been written on life for us ;
Not at first can we read them right,
All untrained is our mortal sight.
Patience—it may be those lessons of gold
Will become plainer as we grow old.

Swift as a feverish dream Time goes,
Life's brief volume is near its close ;
Fast, so fast have those pages turned—
What of the lessons still unlearned !
For the trembling hand must loose its hold,
We can read no longer when we are old.

Pitying Spirit, who knowest all,
When from our clasp life's book shall fall,
Take it, and make each meaning plain ;
Read us the mystery of joy and pain ;
Teach us Thyself life's lessons of gold
In the beautiful World where none grow old !

HER FIRST LOVE-LETTER.

SUCH a letter—far from neat—
Printed in his largest text ;
Just these words, ‘ I love you, sweet !’
There was nothing to come next.

Torn from out his copy-book
Was the leaf, as one might see ;
And himself the missive took—
He was worth no postage fee.

Then his courage failed to match
Strength of love like his that day ;
With his finger on the latch,
He was fain to run away.

* * * *

Down amidst her flowers he bent,
Hid his tender secret low ;
And what grace those blossoms lent
To that secret, who can know !

But, when future years sedate
Unto her soft hands shall bring
Pleadings manly, passionate,
Clasped with seal and signet-ring ;

Perfumed faint with lavender,
Penned on purest vellum sheet,
None will have the charm, for her,
Of that first ' I love you, sweet !'

SHADOWS.

I.

HE is sitting where the sunshine
On the gravelled pathway lies ;
All around the trees are ringing
With the spring's glad harmonies ;
But his form is bent and feeble
That was proud and strong of yore,
And his ears are tired of listening
For a step that comes no more.

As the fresh breeze idly passes,
On the walk pink blossoms fall ;
Yet enough remain for springtime
To adorn herself, withal.
What of one more precious blossom,
Sweet and gay beyond compare !
What of all the scattered petals
Of a young life's promise fair !

Then a shadow on the pathway—
 And his lips for joy are dumb ;
 Tender lips his own are pressing,
 Saying, ' Father, I have come !'
 Life recovers all its brightness,
 Other shadows fly away
 At the falling of *that* shadow
 On the leafy walk to-day !

II.

She is standing in the harbour,
 With her fixed and dreamy gaze
 On a vessel's perfect shadow
 Which a ripple scarcely sways.
 But her heart is wand'ring ever
 To some dim and distant main,
 And she thinks of rosy hours
 That can never be again.

Joyous sounds will echo round her
 As the voyagers come on shore ;
 Once she scanned each sunburnt visage,
 Now her time of hope is o'er.
 She had best be turning homeward,
 If a home indeed it were,
 When the faint-hued autumn flowers
 Smiled her only welcome there.

Then—an arm is flung about her—
 She is gathered to a breast ;
 And the pain is all forgotten,
 And the sorrow hushed to rest.

Hope's bright star once more is rising,
Fast away sad shadows glide
As that fair returning vessel
Casts its shadow on the tide.

AMONG THE LILIES.

OH, to walk the woods at morning,
In the time of hope and spring,
When the boughs are all a-flutter,
And a thousand voices ring ;
And the restless leafy shadows
Dance and quiver, fairy-light,
On the ferny, mossy carpet—
This is wonder and delight.

Oh to dream amid the grasses,
Where the lilies nod and swing,
And to drink each lovely perfume
That the passing breezes bring ;
To be soothed by gentle murmurings
Up above that never cease,
Of the doves within the elm-trees—
This is rapture—this is peace.

Distant sounds grow ever fainter—
Dying—dying far away ;
Toil and strife may come to-morrow,
We will revel in to-day,
Whilst the hours have all the swiftness
Of the bird-wings floating by,
And the sweetness of the lilies,
And the pureness of the sky.

ANGEL FORMS.

WHEN over sea and sky the night-shades holy
In softest silence creep,
Two children fair rise slowly, ever slowly,
Out of the starlit deep.

And from their lips an evening song comes stealing,
And echoes to the shore,
And enters where a woman pale is kneeling
Upon a nursery floor.

She bends above two little unused pillows,
Recalls each silken tress,
And cries aloud, 'Give back, ah, cruel billows,
Their baby loveliness !'

But could she now behold her lost, her fairest,
Oh, she would deem them more—
Nay, far more lovely than in moments rarest
They seemed to her of yore !

WITH FORGET-ME-NOTS.

DREAMILY flows the rippling river,
Winding away serene and blue,
Singing and singing on for ever
One little song the morning through.

Blue is the mist that hangs so faintly,
Like a dim veil the fields above;
Blue is the heaven that soft and saintly
Seems to look down on all with love.

Would I could paint the peace unbroken,
Tell the joy of this rare blue day,
Send you at least, some sweet, meet token
Of thoughts and wishes from far away.

Lo, at my feet blue flow'rets tender,
Warm with the kiss of the noontide sun !
Here—let them mirror you all the splendour
Of mist and river and sky in one !

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THERE is a little bird I have,
He sings both night and day ;
He has a tune for when I'm grave,
A tune for when I'm gay ;
He flies not when the swallows fly,
But constant is to me,
And he will live as long as I—
My bird of Memory

HAUNTED.

A FILM is o'er the windows,
The porch is mossed and gray ;
The old house has been empty now
For many and many a day.

But as I stand before it,
The walls so dull and bare
Are lit with springtide blooms that hang
In lilac clusters fair.

The windows are flung open,
And laughing forms appear,
And voices ring about the place
I thought no more to hear.

What link was it united
The dear old past with now?
Perhaps that snatch of evening song
From yonder sunlit bough.

AN AUTUMN FRIEND.

WHEN the roses have departed,
And the last, last birds are flown,
Then comes Memory, tender-hearted,
Fondly gives us back our own—

Gives us back the sweets of May-time,
And the charm of summer hours ;
Brings again the mirth of hay-time,
Opens all life's closing flowers ;

Lets us still return in spirit
Where we first spread childish hands,
Wildly joyous to inherit
Childhood's right to fairy lands.

Tender Memory, wisely keeping
From us all she can of tears ;
Happy most when busy reaping
Bloom and sunshine from the years.

SUNSET.

SHADOWS now are growing longer
O'er the stretch of meadow land,
From the elm-trees tall and stately,
From the cattle where they stand ;
Telling of unbroken hours,
When the labourer may rest,
Lifting, like the hands of angels,
Daily cares from lives opprest.

Dusk of eve is stealing slowly
Over tower and emerald lawn,
Veiling park and perfumed gardens
Like a curtain gently drawn ;
Touching all with fairy softness,
Bringing healing in its train—
Dew unto the rich man's flowers,
Sleep to calm the busy brain.

There are shades about us gath'ring—
Dimly, silently they fall ;
Man and master, prince and peasant,
They must e'en envelop all.
Shall we fear them ? Nay ; they promise
Sweet repose, relief from ills ;
They are but the restful shadows
Of the Everlasting Hills.

BEYOND.

WE gaze upon the landscape
That seemed but yesterday
A living, moving ocean
Of colour soft and gay.

'Oh, vanished joys !' we murmur ;
'Oh, beauty so laid low !
Can this world be the same world
We roamed a while ago ?'

Then comes another murmur,
And answers to our own :
'Learn ye fair Nature's patience,
Nor count her charms all flown.

'The winter now doth hold them
In durance firm and fond ;
But soon the gate must open,
And ye shall see beyond,

' And catch the fairy flutter
Of flower and gauzy wing,
And hear again the music,
And breathe the breath of spring.'

Oh, joys more sweet than springtime,
That vanish from our hand ;
If we should deem that ever
Upon their graves we stand,

May there be always near us
Some whispering voice to say,
' Have ye but hope and patience,
They are not far away ;

' And soon the gate will open
That keeps them now from view ;
Beyond it they are living
And shining bright for you.'

TRUEST TREASURE.

ONCE, in fairest springtime,
To myself I said,
'Life is like a meadow,
Gay with flowers o'erspread.
I will seek its truest treasure
Where its pleasures shine most fair ;'
But the flow'rets seemed to answer,
'Thou wilt never find it there.'

'Twas the golden summer
When I wrote my name
In a lordly temple
That the world calls Fame.
Heights of glory towered above me,
Paths inviting opened near,
Yet a voice within me whispered,
'That thou seekest is not here.'

When the summer faded
And the way grew wild,
Where the hillside steepened,
Lo, my treasure smiled !
'Tis a flower of tender fragrance,
'Tis a bloom that shall not cease ;
All may seek it, all may find it,
And its blessed name is Peace !

THE WAYSIDE SEAT.

It stands, safe sheltered from sun and breeze,
 That wayside seat 'neath the drooping trees,
 With a welcome true for all who pass,
 From the travelling priest to the village lass,
 The old wife resting from steps of pain,
 Or pedlar counting his modest gain.

 'Stay, stay,' it seems to say,
 'Rest and peace to borrow ;
 Here awhile
 Pause and smile,
 Though you tire to-morrow !'

The children stop for a boisterous game :
 The boor to carve an unknown name ;
 The student comes with a wearied look,
 Preferring his own to Nature's book.
 It has no word for those, I deem,
 But to lovers twain who sit and dream,

 'Stay, stay,' it seems to say,
 'In the world is sorrow ;
 Stay and smile,
 Love awhile,
 Though you frown to-morrow !'

In those time-worn arms in the days ago
 I have laughed with others and mused alone ;
 And the moss around, so green and fine,
 Was the fresher once for tears of mine.

It has nursed sweet hopes in the happy past ;
And if ever I sought it with brow o'ercast,
 ' Stay, stay,' it seemed to say,
 ' Banish sighs and sorrow ;
 Wait awhile,
 Life may smile
Brighter far to-morrow !'

LOVE AND TIME.

TIME looked down with weary sigh—
 Young Love played below—
 ' Who so halt and lame as I ?
 Who so sad and slow ?'
Up then laughing Love did climb,
Swung himself beside old Time.

Gave him prattle, gave him smiles,
 And a sweet, sweet song,
With a hundred pretty wiles
 Helping Time along.
Now, as Love beside him sings
It would seem that Time has wings.

TO ABSENT FRIENDS.

THOUGH a gleam be still revealing some bright flower in
sheltered ways,
There's a sense around us stealing, we have reached the
year's last days.

E'en before the bells are pealing forth their music on
the air,
Comes a presence and a feeling as of Christmas every-
where.

Ah! the chimes may ring as gladly, and our old sweet
songs be sung,
But there's something gone from Christmas that it had
when we were young.

There is something gone from Christmas, yet it scarcely
seemeth so
While we watch the children's faces as their feet flit to
and fro.

It is in the evening, after, when the children's Christmas
ends,
And we pause 'midst feast and laughter, with a 'Here's
to absent friends!'

As we name them all in silence, it is then too well we
know
What it is that's gone from Christmas since the glad
times long ago.

For, beyond the widest severance earth can make from
east to west,
Pass our thoughts in tender reverence to the ones we love
the best.

Yet, could life's light veil be riven or our eyes be opened
now,
Close indeed might prove that heaven where, 'neath
flower-circled brow,

Each dear gaze to us is turning with a love that never
ends ;
Each true heart for us is yearning 'mid its thoughts of
absent friends.

Oh for faith to see them clearer, as they name our names
and say,
'Tis another Christmas nearer to that blissful meeting
day !

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

I HEARD a robin singing
In the field on Christmas Day ;
Some message sweet seemed ringing
Thro' that carol soft and gay.

And a little stream came bounding
From the chilly mountain pass,
Its joyous murmur sounding
'Mid the frosted, sunlit grass.

A ruby radiance glimmered
Where the hollies stood a-row,
And I caught the light that shimmered
Over pearls of mistletoe.
The winter rose smiled purely
'Neath a veil of powdered snow ;
Each held a secret, surely,
That no heart like mine could know.

But on the starlit even
There floated an organ strain ;
It rang to the gate of heaven,
And wandered to earth again ;
To all things true and tender
Methought that it held the key ;
And life's fair joy and splendour
Had a meaning new for me.

TO THE NEW YEAR.

HARK ! a sudden peal is falling
On the waiting midnight ear ;
Joybells to each other calling,
Sound thy welcome, glad young year ;
Thou art like a new sweet chime
Rung from out the tower of Time.

Thou art like a garden hiding
'Neath the fairness of the snow ;
Silently, their season biding,
Rest a thousand sweets below.
Weave for us bright bowers of spring,
Where the birds of hope may sing !

Thou art like a silver river,
Fresh from the eternal hills,
Bearing on thy current ever
Our desires and thoughts and wills.
Peaceful be thy course, and free,
Toward the vast absorbing sea !

TO MEMORY.

TENDER, fragrant Memory !
When all else is dead and dry,
Thou wilt in our bosoms lie.
Love can lose its first fair bloom,
Hope may find an early tomb,
Joys and griefs be spent with years,
Sorrow melt away in tears.
Yet when these are past and flown,
We may call thee still our own,
Sweet undying Memory !

THE END.



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